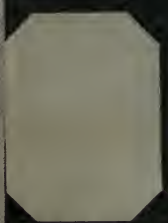
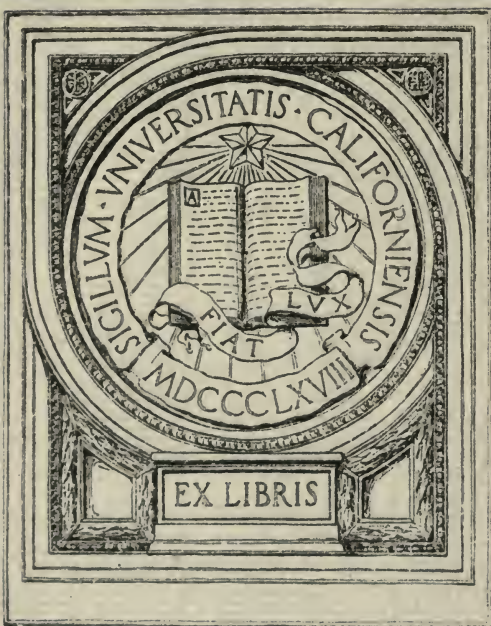


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A BRIEF SKETCH
OF THE
MISSION
OF
SAN XAVIER DEL BAC
WITH A
DESCRIPTION OF ITS CHURCH.

WRITTEN BY A
MISSIONARY OF ARIZONA.

PRICE, 50 CENTS.

The Proceeds to be Used in Aid of the Completion of
St. Mary's Hospital. *Lucas, Arizona*

SAN FRANCISCO:
THOMAS' STEAM PRINTING HOUSE, 505 CLAY STREET.
1880.

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SAN XAVIER DEL BAC.

WHAT is the history of this Mission? How old is its church? Who are those who built it? These are questions which many times we have been asked, and which, more frequently now, are made by the numerous strangers who do not fail to go to San Xavier del Bac* as soon as they have visited the old Presidio, to-day the growing city of Tucson. In order to satisfy this just desire, we will here briefly state what we have been able to learn, either by tradition or by the few records left in the church, about these questions.

The San Xavier Mission, which is located in the Santa Cruz valley, nine miles south of Tucson, was established by the Jesuit missionaries for the Papago† Indians towards the end of the seventeenth century.

The Jesuit missionaries who had established several missions in the State of Sinaloa since 1590, reached Sonora—says the author of the *Noticias Estadísticas*, of that province,—on the 13th of March, 1687, having Father Kino as superior. In 1690 four missions had already been established in Sonora, and were visited by the Rev. Juan Maria Salvatierras, who had been sent from Mexico as Visitor-General. During this visit in the new missions, the Rev. Juan Maria Salvatierras and the Rev. Father Kino had the pleasure of seeing many Indians coming from different tribes, and inviting them to go to their rancherias or villages. Some of these Indians, who had come from a distance of over

*The word Bac, in the language of the Aborigines, means a place where there is water.

†Papago, according to the explanation given to us by one of the Indians of San Xavier, means "hair cut," the sign by which, formerly, those converted to the faith were distinguished.

120 miles—the region where subsequently were established the Missions of Tumacacori and San Xavier—insisted so earnestly in their demands that the missionaries determined to change their itinerary, and followed them as far as Guevavi, where they founded a mission.* This is the first mission which was established in the country now called Arizona.

As for San Xavier, we have not seen any record of its first start as a mission. What we know is that, in 1692, the missionaries were visiting the different tribes of the western part of the country, and that in 1694 they established two missions on the Gila River. But from these facts, can we not infer that the San Xavier mission was already existing, especially when we know, as stated before, that it was the strong wish of the Papago Indians to have missions established in their villages? Moreover, the location which the actually existing church occupies and the rich and extensive valley by which it is surrounded must have attracted at once the attention of the missionaries. We can, then, safely suppose that this mission was established soon after that of Guevavi, if not at the same time. Nevertheless, San Xavier, had no resident priest for several years after its establishment, and was only attended from Guevavi. The first church built at San Xavier, as we have been told by an old Indian, and as can be easily supposed, was a small and modest adobe building, the most easily erected to meet the wants of the new mission. The fragments of records we have found in the church give us an idea of the population that lived in the vicinity, by the number of baptisms which were yearly administered from 1720 to 1767. This population must have been considerable. We find in the same books that twenty-two Jesuit missionaries successively administered at San Xavier between the dates mentioned, the last of which was that of their expulsion by the Spanish government. The missions they had established during their stay in the province of Sonora were twenty-nine in number, consisting of seventy-three Indian pueblos, as is stated in the *Rudo En-*

* This mission, now abandoned, was located in the southern part of Arizona, near the frontier of Sonora.

sayo, a geographical description of Sonora, written in 1762 by one of the Jesuit Fathers. According to the opinion of the author of the *Noticias Estadísticas*, already mentioned, the Mission of San Xavier was one of the most flourishing in Sonora under the care of the Jesuits, and the loss of these missionaries could not but affect it very seriously, as well as all the others.

In the same year, 1767, the Marquess de Croix, Viceroy of Mexico, made an application to the guardian of the Franciscan college of Santa Cruz de Queretaro, Mexico, requesting him on the part of King Charles III, to send fourteen, or at least twelve priests of his order to take charge of the missions of Sonora. The petition was granted, and on the 27th of March, 1768, after a long and painful voyage, the fourteen missionaries asked for landed at Guaymas. Soon after, they proceeded to San Miguel de Horcacitas, where they fixed the headquarters of their labors. Amongst the number of missions that were considered important enough to require the presence of a priest was San Xavier, to which was assigned one of the new missionaries, the Rev. Francisco Garcez. We must here call to the mind of the reader that the different missions had passed through many trials from their establishment to the time the Jesuit Fathers were compelled to abandon them. The most severe of all was a revolt of the Pimas and Ceris, which broke out in 1751, and lasted over two years, causing the death of several missionaries and obliging the others to temporarily leave their missions until better times should come. This revolt subsided in 1754, as is shown by the following note extracted from the records of Tubac:

“On the 21st of November, 1751, all this Pima nation rebelled and deprived this mission of its spiritual minister until now, 1754, in which year the Indians have returned to their pueblo, meaning, as they say, to live peaceably. And for the authenticity of this writing, I sign it.

FRANCISCO PANER.”

The priest who wrote this note was then alone in the missions of the northern part of the province, as we see by the different visits he made at that time, from Tubac to San Xavier and Tucson. The baptisms he administered the

same year in these missions are, for Tubac, 49; for Tucson 50; and for San Xavier, 43.

The revolt alluded to had been instigated, says the author of the *Rudo Ensayo*, by a certain Luis, from Saric, (Sonora) who pretended to be a wizard, and made the Indians consider as advantageous to them what he intended for his own benefit.

The missions which had escaped going to complete ruin during this revolt, were hardly started again when the Jesuits were expelled. No wonder that Father Garcez found San Xavier in a pitiable condition. This mission, says A. Velasco, in his *Noticias Estadísticas*, was very poor when the missionary took possession of it. It was lacking the means necessary not only to support a priest, but even to furnish the most essential things for the worthy celebration of the sacred mysteries. But these difficulties were not enough to deter the new Apostle from his undertaking. As he aimed only at the spiritual welfare of the Indians, he thought but very little of his personal comfort. His zeal won the admiration of the Indians as they saw him accommodating himself to their barbarous customs. His bed was the bare ground, and for covering he had nothing but his clothes. His food was that of the Indians, as he had no purveyor but Providence alone. His breakfast consisted of a cup of atole (corn mush). Instead of bread, tortillas (pancakes); and some dish of wild plants such as quelites, sow-thistle, and occasionally roasted corn, made up his whole fare. He never used tobacco in any shape, but carried it always with him in order to gratify the Indians.* Such a mortified way of living was evidently imposed upon him originally by circumstances; but what is worthy of admiration is that Father Garcez did not improve it, even afterwards, when things were better regulated and when a certain amount of provisions was regularly furnished by the government to the missionaries. All he could get in the way of sugar, choc-

* These details about F. Garcez are extracted from the *Corona Serafica del Colegio de Santa Cruz de Queratario*—a work which was published in Mexico, 1792, and which gives the history of the missions of Sonora during the administration of the Franciscan Fathers.

olate and other supplies, was carefully stored and kept for the purpose of gratifying his Indians. These articles were partly issued to them as delicacies, and partly sold in order to get money wherewith to purchase agricultural implements. By this liberality he won completely the affection and the respect of the Indians. During his stay at San Xavier, that is to say from 1768 to 1778, this zealous missionary visited several times all the Indian tribes of Arizona, and prepared almost all of them to receive missionaries, had these been sent to them. But owing to a want of material resources, or rather to a lack of energy on the part of the military authorities, two new missions only could be established during his life and under his leadership. These are the Immaculate Conception and St. Peter and St. Paul, which were opened in March, 1778, on the Colorado river.

That the Papago Indians must have been greatly benefitted by the presence of such a man of God amongst them for the period of ten years, nobody will doubt. As we see in the *Corona Serafica*, the Franciscans, as the Jesuits, their predecessors in the missions, were all zealous men—men who worked faithfully in the duties of their vocation, and who succeeded, by hard labor and privations, not only to teach the Indians the way of salvation, but also how to pass from the miserable condition in which they had been found to the state of a civilized life. Another proof of the success these missionaries had at San Xavier is the church they have left in that Mission, which church, though greatly injured by the time which has elapsed since its erection, is yet, however, a monument attracting the attention of every stranger coming to Arizona.

The date, 1797, which is seen on one of the doors of this church, is, according to the tradition, the date of the monument's completion, the building of which had required fourteen years. This is confirmed by the testimony of a few persons whom we have seen since we have been living in Arizona, and who assert that they assisted at the dedication of the church.

Who are the priests that built it?

No mention has been made of their names in any of the records we have met with, nor did those true sons of the humble St. Francis put on the walls any mark that could manifest their personal merit to future generations. What they did was to place the coat-of-arms of their Order on the frontispiece of the church, as if to say to us: We, unknown to you, poor religious of St. Francis, have built this for you; pray for us! Those men have been very different in that respect from many of the visitors who, inconsiderately, we suppose, have contributed too much to the defacement of the monument by writing or carving inscriptions on it. The missionaries who had left their country to go after the conquest of souls for Heaven, were not working for fame or any personal interest. What they aimed at was to please God in the discharge of their duties, leaving to Him to take note of the little good they might be able to do. Nevertheless, if the tradition be right about the time spent for the building of the church, we can raise the veil of humility by looking at the names of the missionaries of whom mention is made in the church records during the said period. According to this tradition the present church, which was built near and to replace the old one left by the Jesuits, was commenced in 1783, and, as inferred from the books, under the administration of the Rev. Balthasar Carillo, whose name is mentioned in said books from May 22d, 1780, to 1794. His successor as Superior of the Mission was his assistant priest, the Rev. Narciso Gutierrez, who remained in charge until 1799, having successively as assistants the Rev. Mariano Bordoy, Ramon Lopes and Angel Alonzo de Prado. From these considerations, we may safely conclude that it is to the above-named priests, and especially to the two who acted as Superiors, that we are indebted for the too much dilapidated, but yet elegant and rich church of San Xavier.

The Rev. Balthasar Carillo and the Rev. Narciso Gutierrez were not permitted to remain at San Xavier until the end of their useful apostolic career. Both of them, and probably for the purpose of using their experience for the

building up of a new church, were assigned one after the other to the Mission of Tumacacori, where they died. In the year 1822, Dec. 13, we see by the records of that church, J. Ramon Liberos, minister of the Mission of San José de Tumacacori, transferred the bones of the Reverend Balthasar Carillo and Narciso Gutierrez from the old church to the new one, and buried them in the sanctuary at the gospel side. In token of its authenticity, the paragraph of the records bore the signature of Ramon Liberos. In another writing of the 1st of January, 1821, referring to a pastoral visit of the Bishop of Sonora to the Mission of Tumacacori, we find that the death of Father Gutierrez had occurred only a short time previous to the said date. As for Father Carillo, we have no record about the time his useful life was ended.

It may be asked here what were the means the missionaries had at their disposal for the erection of such structures as those, the remains of which are seen at San Xavier, Tumacacori and other places.

Leaving apart the marvelous products of the rich mines which are supposed to have been held in possession by the ancient missionaries, and which, probably, have never existed as such, as no mention is made of them in the old records, we answer the question: According to the writers of two of the works which have contributed to the redaction of this notice, the *Rudo Ensayo* and the *Noticias Estadísticas*, the churches were built by the missionaries, with the sole product of the land assigned by the government to each one of the missions, which land was cultivated by the Indians under the direction of their respective ministers. To this resource we might add the product of the live stock, which was considerable at times in several of the missions, and also what the missionaries were able to spare of the scant allowance of provisions which were issued to them by the government, amounting yearly to \$300 for each one. This explains why the building of the churches required so long a time, and also why some of them remained unfinished in some of their parts.

Deeming it will not be out of place, we will say a few words about the dealing of the missionaries with the Indians and about the way they taught them, little by little, the manners of a civilized life. First of all, it must be borne in mind that orders had been given, over and over again by the Kings of Spain, that the Indians should be treated fairly, as we see it stated by Juan de Solorzano* and that the missionaries never departed from the royal decree. But, to confine ourselves to our subject, we will only give some particulars we have received about San Xavier, from men who saw the Fathers at work and who were employed by them, as foremen, in the different labors carried on in this Mission. According to the statement of these men, the Indians were free to work for themselves or for the church; to cultivate their own fields or the church land, with this difference, that the former had to look for their maintenance, while the latter were supported by the Mission. Those who worked for the Mission were depending on it for food and clothing, not only for themselves, but for their families. For that purpose, provisions of any kind were stored in the mission house, called the Convent, and distributed in due time. Early in the morning the Indians had to go to church for morning prayers and to hear Mass. Breakfast followed this exercise. Soon after a peculiar ring of the bell called the workmen. They assembled in the atrium, a little square place in front of the church, where they were counted by one of the priests and assigned to the different places where work was to be done. When the priests were in sufficient number they used to superintend the work, laboring themselves, otherwise they employed some trustworthy Mexicans to represent them. Towards the evening, a little before sundown, the workmen were permitted to go home. On their arrival in the houses which were located round the plaza, one of the priests, standing in the middle of this plaza, said the evening prayers in a loud voice in the language of the tribe. Every word he pronounced was repeated by some selected In-

*De Indiarum Jure, lib. III, Caput VI.

dians who stood between him and the houses, and lastly by all the Indians present in the tribe. Notwithstanding these orderly measures, many of the Indians fled every day, as is reported in the *Rudo Ensayo*, from their respective squads before reaching the place where they had to work, and tried only to be present at meals. Nevertheless, these are the men who, by their work, enabled the missionaries to build their churches and houses, learning at the same time how to earn their living in the future. That the Indians must have been happy under such a rule, nobody can doubt, and San Xavier, owing perhaps to the vicinity of the Presidio of Tucson,* became afterwards one of the most flourishing missions under the administration of the Franciscan Fathers. It continued progressing until the year 1810. Then was heard, all [over the territory of New Spain the cry of Independence.

Very soon the government commenced to feel embarrassed financially, on account of the expense it had to incur in order to sustain itself, and the annual help allowed to the missionaries failed to come in due time, and, in many instances, failed to be paid at all. The result to the missions was a hindrance to their material progress. From this time they had to suffer, more or less, year by year, either from the revolutions or from the penury of material resources, until the last stroke was aimed at them by the expulsion of their missionaries, which followed the fall of the Colonial government in Mexico, December 2d, 1827.

Here ends the history of the Indian missions. By the fall of the Spanish domination and the expulsion of the Franciscans, the Indians remained without any protection. They could not but miss at once the support they were wont to receive from the church. In a very short time, many of them, finding themselves without any resources, commenced to scatter, here and there, and to return gradually to the customs of their former Indian life. Then followed the destruction of the live stock left by the mission-

*This Presidio was established some time after the revolt of the Pimas, either to prevent any subsequent rebellion on the part of these Indians or to protect them against their cruel enemy, the Apaches.

aries, and the settlement by the soldiers and Mexican people on the mission lands. Thus the population of the missions commenced to be a mixed one. The Franciscan Fathers who ministered in the Mission of San Xavier, either as resident priests or temporarily, were sixteen in number. The Indians who formed the population of the mission were the Papagoes, as has been said at the beginning of this notice.

These Indians belong to the large tribe known by the name of Pimas, and who are scattered, as yet, over a great portion of Sonora and Arizona. Those living in the southern part of Sonora were called Indians of the Pimeria Baja, while those who had settled on what has become since Arizona, were designated by the name of Indians of the Pimeria Alta. The latter were always more exposed to the attacks of the Apaches, as they were too far from the presidios or military posts to receive any protection from them. Owing, undoubtedly, to this fact, they were all good warriors and succeeded not only in defending themselves, but many times in preventing the enemy from molesting others.

According to the testimony of the authors we have mentioned several times, these Indians, though barbarous in their customs, and very much inclined to the use of intoxicating liquors, which they made from several kinds of wild fruits,* were industrious, thrifty and more sociable than the other Indians living in the missions. Their moral character was excellent. Previous to the establishment of the missions amongst them, they had already, it seems, a knowledge of the sacredness of marriage, as they kept it always in its unity and perpetuity. They were so strict on this point that the woman who committed adultery was punished with death. As far as we know and have been told by several persons, the same rule is in force yet among the Papagoes. It is also said by many who are acquainted with these Indians that they are the most virtuous people in

*The most noxious of these liquors was that made of the elder tree berry.

the world. As for the other tribes, it is but too well known that they have greatly changed their former feelings about morality since they have been in contact with the white people. The Indians are generally chaste in their language, neither do they curse or use any profane words. The number of the Indians living at San Xavier can only be approximately calculated, as many of them do not remain in the pueblo after the harvest of the wheat. Those who are steady in residing are about five hundred in number, forming, as it were, two villages, each one having a special chief. As for the total number of Papagoes living in Arizona, it is estimated to be about 5,000. Amongst the customs which were observed by the Indians, there is one which yet prevails in the Papago tribe, and which we think should be mentioned; and this is, the purification which is practiced for forty days by any Indian who has killed any one, whether with just reason or not. During said length of time this Indian cannot reside in the pueblo, but must remain out in some place where his relatives will carry him the food he needs, and leave him alone. It is only after the purification time is over that the Indian can be received back into the tribe to be treated as a brave, if the man he has killed was an enemy.

As regards the modern history of the Mission of San Xavier, we have but little to say. As a consequence of the expulsion of the Franciscans, the secular priests being very few in the province of Sonora, it was condemned to remain without a resident minister for a long time. It is true it was never abandoned, as the Bishop of Sonora had it put under the charge of the parish priest of Magdalena; but, owing to the distance, and the danger from the Apaches, who, at all times, were infesting the country, the visits of the priests were only on rare occasions. This state of things lasted until 1859. At that time the territory of Arizona was aggregated, by a decision of Rome, to the diocese of Santa Fé, New Mexico, whose bishop, the Right Rev. J. B. Lamy, made it his duty to have the new field opened to his labors, to be visited and provided with some priests.

at once. The first priest his lordship sent for that purpose was his worthy Vicar-General, the active and energetic Very Rev. J. P. Machebeuf, who has since become the Vicar-Apostolic of Colorado. The reverend gentleman found the church of San Xavier the only one which had not gone to complete ruin amongst all the missions of Arizona, still showing many unequivocal proofs of its former beauty. He saw, however, that the vaults of this temple had been greatly injured by leakage, and his first care was to have a coat of mortar put on the outside surface, in order to prevent any further damage. This repair, which we do not doubt has saved the church from falling down, was done either by the work or by the voluntary contribution of the poor people who lived in the vicinity at that time. The Indians of San Xavier, as we have been told by the Right Rev. Bishop Machebeuf, had not forgotten entirely what they had been taught by the old missionaries. As soon as they knew that there was a priest amongst them, they rushed to the church and rang the bells to welcome him as a minister of God. They went to listen to his instructions, and brought to him their children in order to have them baptized. In a very short time the missionary ascertained that they knew some prayers, and, to his great amazement, even two or three were able to sing at mass, though not exactly according to the rules and notations of the Gregorian chant. This was more than was expected; but there was another agreeable surprise for the priest when he saw the Indians bringing to him several church articles, which they had kept for years in their houses lest they should be stolen.

The Very Rev. J. P. Machebeuf could not spend more than a few months in Arizona, the duties of his office as Vicar-General calling him again near his Bishop. It was with sincere regret, as we have heard him say, that he was obliged to leave the country; but he was confident the report he should be able to make would determine the Right Reverend Bishop to send another priest to it. It so happened; another priest was sent soon afterwards.

In March, 1864, the Right Reverend Bishop came to Ari-

zona and made a pastoral visitation to the Mission of San Xavier, and to the new parish of San Augustin, at Tucson. These churches were administered at that time, the former by the Rev. C. Mesea, and the latter by the Rev. L. Bosco, both priests of the Society of Jesus. The next year the agent for the Papagoes, Col. C. D. Poston, made an application to the bishop for a Catholic teacher who could take charge of a school for these Indians. The petition could not be favorably received. The teacher was sent, with three missionaries, also assigned to the Missions of Arizona; but when he arrived at Tucson, Feb. 7, 1866, the Indian Agent had left the country, and the school could not be started as intended—that is to say, as a school supported by the Government. Nevertheless, the priest who then acted as Vicar-General in Arizona determined to use the teacher sent by the bishop, and opened a school at his own expense for the Indians until things could be regulated, as had been proposed by the agent. This school was opened in the church building, but owing to the negligence of the Indians in sending their children in sufficient numbers to it, and to the very limited means the priest had at his disposal, it lasted only a few months. No other school was established for the Papagoes until September, 1873, under the administration of R. A. Wilbur as Indian Agent.

This school, which was established and supported at the expense of the Government, was directed by three Sisters of St. Joseph. From its beginning it seemed that it would be a real success, and it proved so all the time it was in existence. Unfortunately, this length of time was too short. By order of the Department, the Papago Agency was consolidated with that of the Pimas on the 1st of April, 1876, and the school suppressed the same day. Though ignoring the reasons which may have justified such an order, we cannot but regret very deeply that it should have been issued. The Indians were pleased with the way the Sisters treated the children, as they have declared several times to the Inspectors sent by the Government to visit the Agency. Indeed, the Sisters did all in their power to make themselves useful

in the tribe. Besides teaching the children, they visited the sick and took care of them during the leisure time left by the school. It was not long after the school had been established, that a good number of the young Indians could make a fair show in spelling and reading. Gradually the teachers and pupils overcame the great difficulty of understanding each other, and it was no little pleasure for the visitors of the school to see the Sisters speaking now in English, then in the language of the tribe, and being answered by the pupils in either language equally as well. The teaching, besides reading, writing and arithmetic, embraced the household work for the young girls. The Indian children were not very regular in attendance, still, the classes were numerous enough to be conducted with success. Though the school lasted only a short time, it has not been fruitless. This can be seen by the manner in which some of the pupils have regulated their way of living since. From April, 1876, the Papago Indians have remained without a special agent. What the Government gained by that we do not know; but what is obvious to all people acquainted with these Indians is that the loss has been for them. Being far from the agent to whose care they were committed, they felt left too much to themselves, and the consequence to too many of them is that they have fallen back either materially or morally. In these late years they have indulged freely in the use of strong liquors, which has been the cause not only of the squandering of the little money they had, but of many quarrels, ending, too often, in the loss of life.

Religious service is held at San Xavier regularly every other Sunday at 9 A. M.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH.

The church, as can be seen by its arches, surpassing the semicircle and the ornamental work in low relief which covers the flat surfaces of some parts of its walls, belongs to the Moorish style.

The first thing to be noticed is the atrium, a little enclosure 66x33 feet, which separates the church from the plaza, and which was used, as we have seen, for the place of

meetings relating to matters not directly connected with religion.

On the frontispiece, which shows the width of the church with its two towers, is placed, in low relief, the coat-of-arms of the order of St. Francis of Assisi.* It consists of an escutcheon, with a white ground filled in with a twisted cord,† and a cross on which are nailed one arm of our Saviour and one of St. Francis, representing the union of the disciple with the Divine Master in charity and the love of suffering. The arm of our Lord is bare, while that of St. Francis is covered. On the right side of the escutcheon is the monogram of Jesus the Saviour of men, and that of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the left. The frontispiece was surmounted by a life-size statue of St. Francis, which has now gone pretty nearly all to pieces under the action of time.

The church, which is built of stone and brick, is 105x27 feet inside the walls. Its form is that of a cross, the transept forming on each side of the nave a chapel of twenty-one feet square. The church has only one nave, which is divided into six portions, marked by as many arches, each one resting on two pillars, set against the walls. Above the transept is a cupola of about fifty feet in elevation, the remainder of the vaults in the church being only about thirty feet high.

Going from the front door to the main altar, there is on the right hand side wall a fresco representing the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples. Opposite to it is the picture, also in fresco, of the Last Supper. Both paintings measure about 9x5 feet.

In the first chapel to the right hand of the two altars, one facing the nave with the image of our "Lady of Sorrows," standing at the foot of a large cross, which is deeply engraved in the wall, and the other one with the image of the Immaculate Conception. In the same chapel are two frescoes representing Our Lady of the Rosary and the hidden life of our Saviour. The opposite chapel is also adorned with two altars. One of them is dedicated to the Passion of

*The Founder of the Franciscan Order.

†A part of the Franciscan's dress.

our Lord, and the other to St. Joseph. There are also two paintings, the subjects of which are: Our Lady of the Pillar* and the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple.

The main altar, which stands at the head of the church, facing the nave, is dedicated to St. Francis Xavier, the patron saint the Jesuits had chosen for the first church they had established in the mission. Above the image of St. Francis Xavier is that of the Holy Virgin; between the statues of St. Peter and St. Paul, and at the summit of the altar piece, the bust of God, the Creator. The pictures which are seen on the walls near this altar, are: on the right hand side, "The Adoration of the Wise Men," with the "Flight into Egypt;" and on the left, "The Adoration of the Shepherds," with the "Annunciation."

These altars, and especially the principal one, are decorated with columns and a great profusion of arabesques, in low relief, all gilded or painted with different colors, according to the requirements of the Moorish style.

Besides the images we have mentioned, there are the statues of the twelve Apostles, placed in niches cut in the pillars of the church, and many others, representing generally some saints of the Order of St. Francis. There are also in the dome of the cupola the pictures of several personages of the Order who occupied high rank in the Church.

Going again to the front door, there are two small openings communicating with the towers. The first room on the right, which is formed by the inside of the tower, is about twelve feet square, and is used for the ministration of baptisms. A similar room, which is of no particular use now, but which corresponds to the mortuary chapel of the old basilicas, is located in the left tower. From each one of these rooms commence the stairs, cut in the thickness of the walls, and leading to the upper stories. Starting from the baptistery, the second flight reaches the choir of the church. A good view of the upper part of the monument can be had from that place. There are also some frescoes

*An apparition of the Mother of God, at Saragosa.

worth noticing. These are the Holy Family, facing the main altar; St. Francis, represented as raptured by heavenly love, in a fiery chariot; St. Dominic, receiving from the Blessed Virgin the mission to promote the devotion of the Rosary in the world; and the four Evangelists, with their characteristic attributes. Two flights more lead to the belfry, where are four rough and home-made bells of small size. Twenty-two steps more bring the visitor to the top story, and under the little dome covering the tower, an elevation of about seventy-five feet above the ground. Here a glance can be cast on the beautiful and extensive valley of the Santa Cruz, and on the surrounding country.

One of the towers, as can be seen, was never completed; it lacks the dome and plastering from the second story above. The reason why it remained unfinished we do not know; but we suppose it was the scarcity of means which was felt by the missionaries at the beginning of this century, as stated in the notice. Some people venture to say that the fact was owing to the death of the principal builder, which must have occurred before the completion of the work. Some others believe that it was in order to avoid the payment of a tribute which, according to them, was due to the Pope by all finished churches. Neither one of these explanations is admissible by us. The first, because the tradition says that the principal builders of this church were two brothers by the name of Gauna, who were subsequently employed by the missionaries to build the Church of Tumacacori; and the second, because there is no mention whatever in history of any tribute to be paid to the Pope, by any church, whether finished or unfinished.

On the west side of the church, separated from it by a narrow passage, is an inclosure with an opening on the north and a small chapel standing at its western side. The ground enclosed was formerly used as a cemetery, and the chapel was the place where the dead bodies were kept until the ceremony of the burial could be performed.

On the east side of the church is the mission building, which formerly occupied a somewhat extensive space, and

consisted of the rooms necessary for the priests, of a soap factory and stores for the provisions. Besides, there were several farming houses conveniently located on the mission land. Of these buildings there are now only two rooms, making a body with the church, and four extending south and facing on the church plaza.

All these rooms were repaired by the Government in 1873, with the consent and under the supervision of the Bishop, and used as a schoolhouse until 1876.

The little butte adjoining the church shows, on its top, the crater of an extinct volcano.

Here ends what we have to say about the Mission of San Xavier del Bac and its church. That our observations on the subject are incomplete, we admit; but we trust our intention will be rightly interpreted. We had nothing in view but to give as general information the few facts we have been able to find mentioned in the old records, and to contribute to the completion of St. Mary's Hospital with the little money we might realize by the sale of this notice.



